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COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY: A MODEL
FOR COORDINATING GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY AND
UNIVERSITY EXPERTISE TO SUPPORT OUR WAR
FIGHTERS

STATEMENT OF: BRIGADIER GENERAL MARK T. MATTHEWS
COMMANDANT, AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY

JULY 29, 2006

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**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MARK T. MATTHEWS
COMMANDANT, AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
FOR
FIELD HEARING
ON
*AIR FORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY:
AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL MODEL
FOR TODAY'S MILITARY EDUCATION***

29 JULY 2006

INTRODUCTION

Congressman Turner, thank you for this opportunity to speak about an important institution that's been an integral part of this country's air and space dominance for almost ninety years, the Air Force Institute of Technology: AFIT.

AFIT has a remarkable history best reflected in a long line of distinguished graduates that includes General Jimmy Doolittle whose creative genius provided FDR a sovereign option—when none existed—to strike into the Japanese heartland, a response that gave our country a critical moral victory at the onset of WWII; General Bernie Schriever who assuaged our country's fears following the launch of Sputnik by building the Air Force space and ballistic missile programs; General Don Lamberson who demonstrated the viability of laser weapons and established AFIT as a world renowned center for high energy laser research; and a multitude of astronauts including our most recent shuttle Commander, Colonel Steve Lindsey and his Mission Specialist, reserve Colonel Mike Fossum.

AFIT's also been intimately involved in the current war on terror not only through the contributions of our graduates but with ongoing research focused on areas such as taking down enemy networks and stopping improvised explosive devices. The recapitalization of the Air Force fleet, most notably represented by the introduction of the F-22 Raptor and the soon to follow F-35 Lightning II, are successes heavily influenced by AFIT graduates and research across an array of technologies fused in these amazing platforms. Our continued evolution of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles will be aided by AFIT's demonstrating the feasibility of autonomous air refueling. And in looking to the future where we face uncertain threats, such as portended by the recent North Korean launch of a missile with the potential to reach our territory, AFIT is playing a pivotal role as represented by the directed energy technology incorporated on the Airborne Laser.

At a national level, our students well represent AFIT. In a National Security Agency sponsored cyber-warfare exercise pitting the services in head-to-head competition this past spring, our AFIT team not only had the top point total, but was the only team to exceed a 100% score through bonus points. Showing the diversity of our student body, another team from our management program won a State Department national case study in May beating out such institutions as Georgetown, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a school near here you may have heard of, one commonly referred to as "The Ohio State."

Yet, despite its history and contributions, at times some have questioned the need for a defense graduate school. In fact, though reversed two years later by Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters, the Air Force decided to close AFIT in 1996. And it was shortly after

assuming command of AFIT just over a year ago that I learned of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's decision to review whether it would be most appropriate to align AFIT with the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey or, again, close it.

While facing potential closure was not the way I would have chosen to start my new job, the review proved to be of great benefit as it affirmed, as we affirmed in 1998, the unparalleled value of AFIT in executing its mission. That mission is to provide responsive, defense focused education and research to not only the Air Force, but all the elements that provide for the security of our nation; including our sister services, coalition partners and defense affiliated civilians. Quite simply, knowledge is power; and it's our knowledge that makes us the most powerful military in the world.

AIR FORCE PRIORITIES

Validated, AFIT's future looked bright; but other challenges loomed. Two top Air Force priorities as articulated last fall by our new Chief, General Moseley, were to win the war on terror and recapitalize our fleet, arenas, as discussed earlier, in which AFIT is heavily engaged. Nonetheless, the costs of the ongoing war and modernization are forcing tough choices most prominently reflected in previously announced Air Force personnel cuts.

While AFIT has seen significant growth in its student body and faculty over the last few years, it's likely AFIT too will have to adjust to these fiscal realities.

But this does not mean our Air Force leadership is not strongly committed to education. In April of this year Secretary of the Air Force Wynne and our Chief issued a joint "Letter to Airmen" where they stated "to succeed, our expeditionary Air Force will need

all the cultural, political, and technical skills available. One of the most effective ways to develop this knowledge is through advanced education.”

NEW MODEL FOR ADVANCED ACADEMIC DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Questions remain, however, on what mix of these competencies—cultural, political, technical—and in what numbers, best balance the future needs of the Air Force with current operational demands. In fact, AFIT is working with our Air Force headquarters in revamping the system by which we determine those competencies needed by our Airmen, to include advanced education. Under our proposal we would invoke a corporate process to determine both the mix and number of advanced degrees to meet current and projected requirements. Contrasted against today’s billet-based system—one where the “owners” of billets determine whether a given job requires an advanced degree—such a capabilities-based approach can better anticipate future needs and adapt to emerging requirements.

NEW AFIT BUSINESS MODEL

In conjunction with this restructured requirements process, we at AFIT are also pursuing a fundamental change in our traditional business model. As you are well aware, AFIT is an appropriated activity with the cost of educating our students predominantly accounted for in the Air Force’s annual budget. It’s only been recently—largely through congressional support from the Ohio delegation—that AFIT has received the authority to charge and retain tuition for students from the Army, the Navy and the Department of Homeland Security. The ability to do so is critically important as we seek to diversify the AFIT student population with more sister-service students. Not only does this provide

our students a richer learning experience, but sustains an educational capacity while the Air Force adapts to a smaller force size and weathers current fiscal demands. AFIT's intent is to present a comprehensive plan that outlines needed further steps to establish a portion of AFIT operations under this fee-for-service model.

EXPANDED RESEARCH

Supporting this business transformation is a robust AFIT research program. While AFIT has seen a doubling in its sponsored research over the last five years, thanks largely to the special relationship with our neighbors in the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), I think—for many reasons—we should do more. Foremost we have an outstanding faculty, military and civilian, who are well versed in the operations and needs of the Air Force and the Department of Defense. The fruits of their research pay a direct and immediate dividend to our nation's security. Additionally, a strong research program underpins the excellence we bring to bear in the classroom as we shape the minds that will guide our future operations. Finally, strengthening AFIT's reputation as a premier research organization increases its attractiveness to the potential students and faculty among whom we find ourselves increasingly in competition from our sister institutions.

DAGSI

Here I think our involvement in the Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute, or as we all know it, DAGSI, is most constructive. With DAGSI, there exists a structure that provides scholarships and brings students to AFIT. We believe that in its 10 years of service DAGSI has served AFIT well in making AFIT, AFRL and the Air Force better known to the Ohio community.

CONCLUSION

Sadly, I'll be leaving AFIT and the Dayton area this coming Monday. My family and I have immensely enjoyed our all too short tour here, but will follow with great interest the future of this institute and this community. As I reflect over my short year here, my thoughts wander back to Colorado Springs where I entered the Air Force Academy over three decades ago. One of the Academy's hallmarks is the Eagle and Fledgling statue inscribed with the words "Man's flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge."

Let me repeat: that knowledge is power. And it's because of this that the United States Air Force is the most powerful military force in history. It's that knowledge I witnessed September 11th, 2001 in the Pentagon that allowed my compatriots to adapt to an unforeseen circumstance and secure our nations airways as our Command Center filled with smoke. It's that knowledge that innovatively married Air Force Combat Controllers on a wooden saddle with a GPS receiver to guide the devastating destruction of the Taliban just a few weeks later. It was that knowledge that found Zargawi and introduced him to whatever awaits him in the next life, courtesy of your United States Air Force and our Joint team. It's that knowledge that will allow us to penetrate undetected, drop a weapon outside the range of enemy defenses and have it autonomously glide to within my height of its target while leaving unscathed an innocent bystander. And it will be that knowledge that will sustain those who follow us as they battle unanticipated threats to our nation's security—whether through the air, space or cyberspace—thirty years hence.

As Secretary Wynne stated this past April “In a smaller, leaner and more expeditionary-focused Air Force, it is essential that our Airmen have the knowledge and competency to accomplish our mission.” That’s why AFIT is important to the Air Force and our country. I thank you for your support.